

Improving Secondary Education in Ondo State: An Assessment of the Contributions of School Based Management Committees (SBMCs)

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Abstract

The study assessed the contributions of school based management committees (SBMC) in improving secondary education in Ondo State, Nigeria. The study was guided by two research questions. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The target population comprised principals and teachers in public secondary schools in Ondo State. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to sample 60 principals and 540 teachers, making a total of 600 participants from 60 secondary schools out of the existing 599 public secondary schools in the State. The 540 teachers represent five percent (5%) randomly selected out of 10,798 teachers in public secondary schools in the State. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select the secondary schools from 5 Local Government Areas out of the existing five educational zones in Ondo State. A researcher developed instrument titled; Contributions of School Based Management Committees in Improving Secondary Education (CSBMCISEQ) was validated by two experts. The Cronbach alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. This yielded high reliability coefficient values of 0.75. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The findings of the study revealed among others that school based management committees (SBMCs) do not provide security in improving secondary education in Ondo State. Consequently, it was recommended among others that government at all levels through the Ministry and Departments of Education should set up a monitoring team in order to ensure and encourage the SBMCs to be more proactive in discharging their statutory functions. Conclusion was drawn.

Keywords: school based management committees; school improvement; secondary education

Introduction

The challenges of improving education at all levels necessitate the participation of various stakeholders in the school system. Secondary education is the education imparted after the elementary and before tertiary education which is intended to equip the young or

adolescents with practical knowledge, values and understanding towards tertiary education. The improvement of secondary education will not only lead to outstanding academic achievement of learners, but prepare them with values, morals and practical knowledge and skills in order to cope with the academic and social demands

of tertiary education. School improvement is about enhancing students' achievement through focusing on teaching-learning and the conditions which support it (Ashiq, Naseer & Nasarullah, 2014). According to Onyali and Akinfolarin (2017), school improvement is about experiencing a progressive change in teaching and learning process leading to better academic performance of students. Organizational change is an alteration and adjustment in the existing arrangement in an enterprise. School improvement is about experiencing a modification or enhancement in all aspects of school administration thus, increasing students' academic achievement and administrative success. A school cannot be said to have improved without reference to the performance of its output (students'). Students' are the reason for school establishment and the bases for staff employment so as to cater for the educational needs of the students. In order to cater for the educational needs and aspirations of the students', notable stakeholders in the education industry must collectively contribute their quota to the overall improvement of the school.

The term stakeholder in education refers to everyone who is interested, playing certain role(s) and investing in education in order to ensure the success of the school system at all levels. Stakeholders in education includes; the government through the ministry and departments of education, school administrators, teaching and non-teaching staff, students, parents, community members, private investors, school board members, and school based management committees (SBMC). The need to encourage greater participation of stakeholders in the administration of schools to promote school effectiveness and improvement propelled the

Government of Nigeria to introduce School Based Management Committee (SBMC). SBMC is the delegation of authority to organized stakeholders to perform statutory responsibilities in the administration, monitoring, evaluation and review of educational activities of the school. In his view of the concept, Gamage (2006) defined SMC as a pragmatic approach to a formal alteration of bureaucratic model of school administration with a more democratic structure. The goal of SBMC is to strengthen community involvement in the administration of the secondary schools so as to provide free access for all children to acquire functional education. It is also aimed at motivating the spirit of community ownership of the school system to the extent of mobilizing community resources for school improvement. School Based Management Committee is the devolution of power and authority to significant stakeholders to perform statutory responsibilities in the administration, monitoring, evaluation and review of education activities for sustainable goal-oriented governance and effective teaching and learning activities (Ayeni & Ibukun, 2013). Devolution of power and authority involves delegation of responsibility with commensurate authority to successfully perform the specific tasks. With the introduction of SBMC, it is expected that the absolute authority vested on the school principal will be decentralized to the SBMC to discharge certain responsibilities. However, Akinfolarin (2017a) observed that some school heads avoid delegating certain duties to their assistants due to the fear of their jobs been overtaken by subordinates which may amount to delay in tasks completion. School Based Management Committee is a statutory combination of notable stakeholders who are entrusted with

certain responsibilities and tasks in a bid to ensure effective administration of the school. SMBCs meet frequently to organize activities so as to improve schools mode of operation and promote the government agenda of ensuring quality education for all. It is essential to note that the membership and composition of School Based Management Committee (SBMC) varies across countries, States and schools. According to American India Foundation (2011), SMBCs are voluntary groups made up of people who represent the school community and may include pupils, teachers, parents, community leaders as well as other community base groups interested in education. In Nigeria, membership of School Based Management Committee (SBMC) include but not limited to; head teacher/principal, teachers representatives, parents, representative of pupils/students, PTA representatives, Artisans, notable community members, representatives of old students, traditional rulers and community based organizations. School base management committees (SBMCs) are established by government to act as a synergy between schools and the communities intended to contribute to school development planning and decision-making for improved teaching and learning process. SBMCs collaborate with their various municipalities to sensitize and mobilize parents on enrolment, attendance, and retention of their children in schools. They assist in the supervision and discipline of personnel, securing school resources, fund raising, conflict management, and monitoring school's physical facilities in order to ensure accurate maintenance. Unfortunately, some SBMC members lack the peculiar experience and capacity to discharge their roles effectively.

In Nigeria, the committee is meant to achieve the following objectives among others: assist head teachers in treating discipline problem in school; ensure security of human/material resources and render annual statement of account, income expenditure and identify staff requirements (Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria Institute of Educational Planning and Administration and United Nations Children's Fund (2014). In view of the foregoing, this study placed focus on the contributions of school based management committee in the provision of security and maintenance of discipline in improving secondary education in Ondo State.

Security and safety in schools is the duty of teachers, students' parents, principals and others stakeholders alike. Generally, schools are entrusted to provide a safe and healthy learning environment as families and communities expect schools to keep their children and youth safe from threats. Keeping the school safe is an essential task of all stakeholders that should not be negated in school management, since effective teaching and learning to a great extent depends on it. Security/Safety, according to Nzewi (2014), is the control of recognized hazards to minimize the effect of such hazards and this entails protection of people or of possessions. Security and safety in school is about keeping the school environment free of hazardous situations that could put the lives of students and staff at risk within and outside the school. Nigeria is currently experiencing security challenges in various parts of the country which may hinder the continuous operation of the school. However, a safe school is one in which the overall school climate allows students, teachers, administrators, staff and visitors to interact in a positive non-



threatening manner that reflects the educational mission of the school, while fostering positive relationships and personal growth (Butcher & Manning, 2005). School safety is a way of keeping the school environment free from, danger, violence, hazards and risk that might disrupt teaching and learning process in the school. School management in collaboration with stakeholders such as the School Based Management committees constantly embark on safety emergency management planning to forestall the consequences of insecurity in the school. Safety emergency management plan is a plan designed to prevent or minimize the effect of incidents or emergencies on students and staff and the overall functioning of the school. The aim of school safety programmes will not eliminate all risks but it will try as much as possible to eliminate the needless risk (Nwankwo, 2003). Students' should be familiarized and taught how to handle safety issues in relation to violence, home accident, road safety, fire outbreak, use of first aid apparatus, danger of contaminated food, poisons, effects of alcohol, drug abuse among others. Unsafe school environment hinders the provision of quality education as it declines the efficiency of the teachers due to the fear of unsafe condition of the school. The provision of a secured teaching and learning environment is a shared responsibility of all stakeholders in the school system. It is regrettable that many stakeholders have are not taking the issue of security/safety serious as many students are still exposed to various security threats within and outside the school. There should be security consciousness among school heads, teaching and non-teaching staff, and students in order to safeguard lives and property within and outside the school premises. Staff and students should be educated on how to handle hazardous

apparatus for their safety. Some students are wrongly exposed to harmful apparatus during laboratories and workshop experiments without providing the necessary safety measures to avert unforeseen circumstances. The contribution of stakeholders such as SBMC in the provision of security mechanism will help to enhance a friendly and a safer teaching and learning atmosphere for improved academic outcome. Also, students and their instructors must be well disciplined, not just in handling school property but also in their general conduct within and outside the school premises.

Discipline is about preparing an individual to be an inclusive and efficient citizen of his society. A person is said to be disciplined when he or she knows and exercises his or her rights and obligations to the community in a legitimate manner. Discipline is the art of conforming to an existing rules and principles for peaceful co-existence. Indiscipline is a deviation or disrespect to the existing rules and regulation of a group or organization. School discipline in the view of Rundell (2007) is the practice of making people to obey rules of behaviour and punishing them if they do not. School discipline is a technique of directing staff and students' behavior to conform to the rules and code of conduct of the school. Learning requires a favorable environment that demands a school administrator, teachers and learners to operate in a disciplined environment to yield expected outcome. Apart from the school heads being the major ones in the enforcement of disciplinary measures in the school, teachers also help to carry out disciplinary actions against defaulting students on daily basis. Other stakeholders also assist the school management in implementing the school's disciplinary policies, rules and regulations.

Acts of indiscipline radiate among school heads, students, academic and non-academic staff ranging from cultism, stealing, violation of school dress code, truancy, drug abuse, lateness to school, examination malpractices, violent acts, mismanagement of funds, and destruction of school facilities among others which hinder the successful actualization of educational goals. The current economic challenges characterized by robbery, corruption, kidnapping, assassination, bad leadership, smuggling and resources vandalism are products of indiscipline arising from the foundational level (school). Modern approaches should be adopted in dealing with disciplinary issues in the school. Some school heads adopt punitive strategies in their attempt to control indiscipline which at most times ignites resistance from the students as some students regard punishment as wickedness or oppression. Some parents also raise complaints concerning the mode of punishment given to their children/wards and even go as far as treating such case violently with the school authority.

Discipline should not be seen as a means of oppressing the offender, but to correct negative and illegitimate behavior thus, making the offender a law abiding member of the society. One of the major challenges faced by school administrators and teachers in disciplining students using corporal punishment is students being rude or becoming hardened and adaptive to the punishments given to them. Also, poor communication with teachers and students representatives in preventing and handling disciplinary issues in the school may frustrate all efforts to keep the school in order and conducive enough for goals achievement. The presence of good information and communication system in school management will help to carry teachers' and students' along with school

aims and objectives which would motivate them for improved teaching and learning process (Akinfolarin, 2017b). School heads should adopt mentoring, counseling, communication, supervision, orientation, and moral coaching as strategies for controlling indiscipline in schools. School heads and teachers should see themselves as role models to the students' by behaving and presenting themselves in an orderly manner worthy of emulation. It is unfortunate that some school heads and teachers worthy of emulation to their students as they openly engage in different forms of undisciplined acts. Some teachers indiscipline acts ranges from; encouraging exam malpractices, financially extorting students, sexual relationship with students, absenteeism, encouraging cultism, wrong dressing, fighting, lateness to school among others.

A disciplined school is one in which the school administrator, students and teachers behave in an orderly manner with progressive academic performance, peaceful teaching and learning environment, tranquility and devoid of all unacceptable behaviors. Ensuring school discipline is a shared responsibility of the government, school heads, teachers, students, parents and other notable stakeholders in the school system. The contributions of educational stakeholders on the platform of school based management Committee (SBMC) especially in the areas of providing safety measures and maintaining discipline among others will be of great help in improving school administration and thus, creating an uninterrupted citadel of learning.

Statement of the Problem

The persistent security challenges amounting to loss of lives and property on a daily basis in Nigeria is highly worrisome. Secondary

schools in many States in Nigeria particularly, Ondo State are witnessing the terrible outcomes of insecurity due to poor moral and cultural values in the society. The security and safety menace in our schools which is equally attributed to lack of discipline among individual staff and students may be as a result of the inability of notable stakeholders to rise up and contribute their quotas in ensuring peaceful and safe teaching and learning climate thereby, enhancing the overall improvement of the school. Premised on these challenges, the study aimed at assessing the contributions of school based management committees in improving secondary education in Ondo State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to assess the contributions of school based management committees in improving secondary education in Ondo State, Nigeria.

Specifically, this study sought to assess:

1. The contributions of school based management committees in the provision of security in improving secondary education in Ondo State
2. The contributions of school based management committees in the maintenance of discipline in improving secondary education in Ondo State

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the contributions of school based management committees in the

provision of security in improving secondary education in Ondo State?

2. What are the contributions of school based management committees in the maintenance of discipline in improving secondary education in Ondo State?

Method

The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The target population comprised principals and teachers in public secondary schools in Ondo State. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to sample 60 principals and 540 teachers from 60 secondary schools out of the existing 599 public secondary schools in Ondo State. The 540 teachers represent five percent (5%) randomly selected out of 10,798 teachers in public secondary schools in the State. stratified random sampling technique was used to select the secondary schools from 5 Local Government Areas out of the existing five educational zones in Ondo State. A researcher developed instrument titled; Contributions of School Based Management Committees in Improving Secondary Education (CSBMCISEQ). The 18-item instrument was structured on a four points rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The face validation of the instrument was established by two experts, one in the Department of Educational Management, Adekunle Ajasin University, Ondo State and one in the Department of Educational Foundations (Measurement and Evaluation Unit), Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Anambra State. The Cronbach alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. This yielded high reliability coefficient values of 0.75. The instrument was administered by the

researchers together with four (4) research assistants who were properly briefed on how to approach the respondents. Mean and standard deviation were used in answering the two research questions. The mean

responses were adjudged on the basis that any mean score of 2.50 or above is taken to indicate agreement while any mean score that falls below 2.50 is taken as disagreement

Results

Research Question 1: What are the contributions of school based management committees in the provision of security in improving secondary education in Ondo State?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation ratings of school based management committees' contributions in the provision of security in improving secondary education

S/N	Items	Principals (N- 60)			Teachers (N- 540)		
		\bar{X}	SD	Decision	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	Provision of first aid kits in the school for temporary treatment of ill staff and students	2.58	1.22	A	2.66	1.31	A
2.	Provision of burglary protector to secure school property	2.51	1.30	A	2.54	1.29	A
3.	Involving in the recruitment of qualified security personnel	2.13	.78	DA	2.35	.80	DA
4.	Providing security/safety equipments to enhance school security of lives and property in the school	1.14	1.33	DA	2.14	1.20	DA
5.	Providing communication equipment in case of emergency situation	1.25	1.40	DA	1.45	1.42	DA
6.	Training school staff to understand their responsibilities in preventing and responding to violent situations	2.40	.89	DA	1.55	.75	DA
7.	Partnering with State security agencies to forestall crises in the school	2.50	.90	A	2.16	.50	DA
8.	Meeting regularly to review and formulate security/safety policies	1.55	1.02	DA	1.30	1.10	DA

in the school							
9. Periodically inspecting school facilities for the safety of students and staff	2.70	1.10	A	2.40	1.55	DA	
10. Encouraging teachers and principals to often give prompt attention to students' health challenges	2.10	1.03	DA	1.46	1.05	DA	
Mean of Means and Standard Deviation	2.10	1.10	DA	2.00	1.10	DA	

Source: authors' field work

A = Agree / DA = Disagree

Except items 7 and 9, items 1 and 2 on Table 1 is above the mean score of 2.50 which indicate that both principals and teachers agreed with the statements while items 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 10 mean scores is below 2.50 which indicate that both principals and teachers disagreed with the statements. The mean of means scores of 2.10 and 2.00 for principals and teachers

respectively indicates that respondents disagreed that school based management committees provide security in improving secondary education in Ondo State. The standard deviation scores reveals that the responses of principals' and teachers' rating for each item is close, signifying that their responses are uniform.

Research Question 2: What are the contributions of school based management committees in the maintenance of discipline in improving secondary education in Ondo State?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation ratings of school based management committee contributions in the maintenance of discipline in improving secondary education

S/N	Items	Principals (N- 60)			Teachers (N- 540)		
		X	SD	Decision	X	SD	Decision
11.	Ensuring that school rules and regulations are integrated with school policy	2.56	1.22	A	2.52	1.25	A
12.	Ensuring that students have copy of school rules and regulation	2.23	.64	DA	1.42	.20	DA
13.	Ensuring punishment is fair and consistently applied	3.05	.99	A	2.62	.75	A
14.	Reporting misbehaved teachers to the disciplinary committee for proper action	2.67	1.44	A	2.80	1.67	A

15. Encouraging teachers to be strict on students permission before leaving school ground	2.85	.95	A	2.56	.70	A
16. Educating students on good moral behavior	2.56	1.07	A	2.51	1.09	A
17. Encouraging corporal punishment on students	2.62	1.22	A	2.48	.30	DA
18. Proving counseling services to staff and students who engage in indiscipline acts	2.15	1.04	DA	1.40	1.16	DA
Mean of Means and Standard Deviation	2.59	1.07	A	2.29	0.89	A

Source: author's field work

A = Agree / DA = Disagree

Except items 17, items 11, 13, 14, 15, and 16 on Table 2 is above the mean score of 2.50 which indicate that both principals and teachers agreed with the statements while items 12 and 18 mean scores is below 2.50 which indicate that both principals and teachers disagreed with the statements. The mean of means scores of 2.59 and 2.29 for principals and teachers respectively

Discussion

Based on data analysis on Table 1, the study found out that except items 7 and 9, both principals and teachers were of the same view that school based management committees (SBMCs) do not provide security in improving secondary education in Ondo State by involving in the recruitment of qualified security personnel, providing security/safety equipments to enhance school security of lives and property in the school providing communication equipment in case of emergency situation, training school staff to understand their responsibilities in preventing and responding to violent situations, meeting regularly to review and

indicates that respondents agreed that school based management committees contribute to the maintenance of discipline in improving secondary education in Ondo State. The standard deviation reveals that the responses of principals' and teachers' rating for each item is close, signifying that their responses are uniform.

formulate security/safety policies in the school, and encouraging teachers and principals to often give prompt attention to students' health challenges. The mean of means scores of 2.10 and 2.00 for principals and teachers respectively indicates that school based management committees do not provide security in improving secondary education in Ondo State. This is similar to the findings of Kirui, Mbugua and Sang (2011) which indicated among others that schools in Kenya face security challenges, lack of training in security and safety problems in schools. The findings of this study also agree with that of Amanchukwu (2012) which revealed that secondary schools in some local government areas of Rivers State face a lot of security challenges among others.

The study found out on Table 2 that except few items, both principals and teachers were of the same view that school based management committees (SBMCs) contribute to the maintenance of discipline in improving secondary education in Ondo State by ensuring that school rules and regulations are integrated with school policy, ensuring punishment is fair and consistently applied, reporting misbehaved teachers to the disciplinary committee for proper action, encouraging teachers to be strict on students permission before leaving school ground, educating students on good moral behavior, and encouraging corporal punishment on students. However, the mean of means scores of 2.59 and 2.29 for principals and teachers respectively indicates that school based management committees contribute to the maintenance of discipline in improving secondary education in Ondo State. This is contrary by the finding of Osei-Owusu and Sam (2012) which indicated that SBMC have been very effective in ensuring pupils and teachers discipline in the school.

Implications of the findings

The implication of the findings is that school authorities need to be more conscious of the safety of lives and property within and outside the school premises to avoid emergency situations. The issue of security and discipline in the school is a collective effort of all stakeholders in the education enterprise. If there is no sincere collaboration between stakeholders and school authorities, there might be unpredicted casualties and if the incessant acts of staff and students indiscipline is not appropriately curtailed it will deter the

smooth administration and improvement of the school.

Conclusion

Improving secondary education is not only the duty of the school principal, but all stakeholders in the school system. The school based management committee (SBMC) is established by the government to support the efforts of school authorities in ensuring effective school administration and contributing to the overall improvement of the school for goals attainment. However, the study concluded based on the findings that school based management committees (SBMCs) do not provide security in improving secondary education in Ondo State. Also, that school based management committees (SBMCs) contribute to the maintenance of discipline in improving secondary education in Ondo State.

Recommendations

1. Government at all levels through the Ministry and Departments of Education should set up a monitoring team in order to ensure and encourage the school based management committees (SBMCs) to be more proactive in discharging their statutory functions.
2. The school based management committees (SBMCs) in Ondo State should see the issue of security and safety of human lives and property in the school as an indispensable task, therefore, contribute their best towards ensuring a secured and friendly teaching and learning climate for both staff and students.
3. Also, school based management committees (SBMCs) should

maintain discipline in the school by ensuring that students have copies of school rules and regulation and proving counseling services to staff and students who engages in indiscipline acts.

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